



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

# Innovative Housing Grants Program

## THE MANUFACTURED HOUSING ALTERNATIVE

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### INTRODUCTION

The study examines the present status of manufactured housing developments in Alberta and specifically in Red Deer. The purpose of this analysis is to raise the quality of site planning and design of manufactured housing developments while offering practical engineering standards, to achieve development costs below that of a traditional single-family subdivision.

### METHODOLOGY

Five privately owned mobile home parks and three mobile home subdivisions in the City of Red Deer are examined with respect to layout, road widths, servicing and management. A comprehensive evaluation is made of each development listing good features and bad features.

An 11-hectare site in Red Deer is then examined for possible use as a manufactured housing community and three alternative designs are worked out. The first design utilizes a traditional subdivision layout, the second is modified by introduction of narrower roads and curvature, while the third utilizes a cluster concept. Development cost estimates for the three designs are then compared.

### CONCLUSIONS

From a site planning viewpoint it is found that the single most important factor which presently detracts desirability of mobile home developments is visual amenity. Visual amenity can be improved by avoiding monotonous rows of homes along straight streets with little or no landscaping.

The other important factor suggested is that the site planning should be comprehensive and include location of the home, driveway, privacy area, etc. Some general guidelines established are:

- use of curved streets
- variable set backs
- alternate home placement angles
- extensive landscaping

Application of these guidelines to a typical site in Red Deer yields a concept where homes are grouped in 10 to 15 unit clusters in short cul-de-sacs and crescents with access to a central collector street. This provides an attractive and interesting layout which offers privacy, identity and good accessibility (see Figure 1: Plan of Cluster Layout).

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Figure 1: Plan of Cluster Layout

The small cluster layout also allows for reduced road widths and reductions in utility pipe sizing without any significant loss of convenience or reliability. It is estimated that development cost savings of up to 30 percent over a traditional single-family subdivision can be achieved.

It will take time to overcome the stigma attached to the old "trailer courts" that can still be found in almost every municipality. Nevertheless, a well designed, high amenity manufactured housing community can offer high quality single family housing at costs more normally associated with multi-family developments.